

Online Dating

There are always risks in dating, especially when you date strangers. Teens should not be cyberdating, and specific rules exist for teens online.

When you first meet a cyberdate off-line, you feel as though you already know the person—from the chats, phone calls, and emails you may have previously shared.

As much as you THINK you know them, you are basing your perception on what they have told you. Treat the first meeting as though you are meeting a stranger. Not everyone is totally truthful online.

One characteristic you are able to experience up close in a meeting is one's personality. This can easily be hidden in online chats and emails, but not in a one-on-one meeting. Use this to your advantage in determining if you wish to see this person again.

Online dating may not be the thing for you, so don't let anyone pressure you into meeting someone you don't know, especially if you are uncomfortable or uneasy about it. Use good judgment, talk to others who have dated online, and make the decision for yourself.

According to Online Dating Magazine.com ...

There are over 100 million single adults in America, with 40 million using online dating services, 11% ages 30 - 49, and 9% are age 50+.

It is predicted that Americans will spend \$1.7 billion on dating services by the year 2013.

10 percent of members that pay for dating services stay on for less than three months.

Singles that use dating sites, 33% form a relationship, 33% do not, and 33% give up dating online.

With free dating sites, it is estimated that at least 10% of new members each day are scammers.

Thirty one percent of Americans either have used an online dating service, or know someone that has. That is approximately 94,876,000 people have used an online dating site at one time or another!



Lynchburg Police Department
Crime Prevention Unit
805 Court Street
Lynchburg, VA 24505
434-455-6070



**Lynchburg Police
Department**

Internet Dating Safety



Lynchburg Police Department
Crime Prevention Unit
805 Court Street
Lynchburg, VA 24505
434-455-6070

If you choose to date online...

The following are important safety tips to keep in mind if internet dating:

Do not believe everything you read online.

You can be anything or anyone you want to be online. There isn't truth in advertising protection when you date online.

Do not give out personal information online

Personal information that would let someone find you offline should never be shared online. Your full name, where you work, where you live, your phone number, your fax number...these should not be shared online.

Take your time - do not rush into things

Take your time getting to know the person online first. Do not be rushed, and do not rush the other person. Let the relationship develop online until you are comfortable with each other.

Honesty is the best policy

This is not the time to explore your fantasies of being a different person than you are. If you start out lying, eventually you will be caught.

Start with a phone call

You should move from fantasies and chatting online to a phone call before you meet offline in person. Once you are comfortable enough, you can share real phone numbers.



Ask for a recent photo

There's nothing wrong in asking someone if their photos are recent. It is important for you to get a good look at the person you may eventually meet.

Trust your instinct

Your instinct is a powerful medium for knowing when something doesn't feel right. It's the most powerful psychological tool you have at your disposal.

When you do meet, do it with a friend and in a very public place

The first time you meet in person, bring a friend. Meet in a mall or fast food restaurant. Plan for a short first time get together. If they insist on meeting you alone, do not go.

Tell a friend

Make sure someone knows whom you are meeting, where you are going and when you are coming back. If anything goes wrong, they will be the source of information on how to locate the person you have been chatting with.

Never leave or go home with them

You can extend the meeting to dinner or anything else in a public place. However...PUBLIC is the operative word here.

Report any attacks or threats to law enforcement

If things go wrong, whether you followed the rules or not, do not be embarrassed to go to the police. Give them all the facts. If you do not report this person, they in all likelihood will do it again.

Make sure you're using a reputable online dating service or chat

Most will give you a free trial period. Make sure that you can use all of their service during that free trial. Make sure they use anonymizers or re-mailers, to mask your real e-mail address. If someone makes you uncomfortable, report it to your dating service right away.

Red Flags To Watch For

- Too many questions being asked about your financial status
- Evasive or contradictory answers to questions you ask
- A person says "I love you" or feels "connected to you" too quickly
- A person wants to engage in intimate sex talk right away
- If someone takes too long to meet you in person, they may not be interested in a relationship off the phone
- Unwillingness to trade photos
- Someone wants you to get a web cam
- You receive calls only at certain times or on certain days, or the person disappears for days at a time
- Anyone asking for money for any reason
- Listen for questionable characteristics in the person in which you are communicating
- A person lies about their photo or profile

